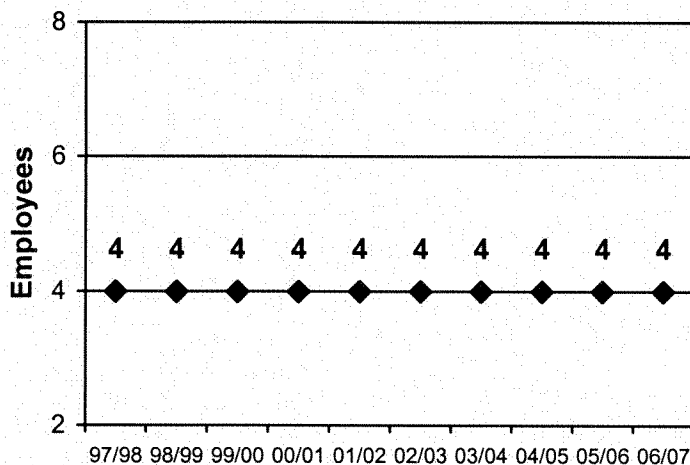


**MISSION STATEMENT**

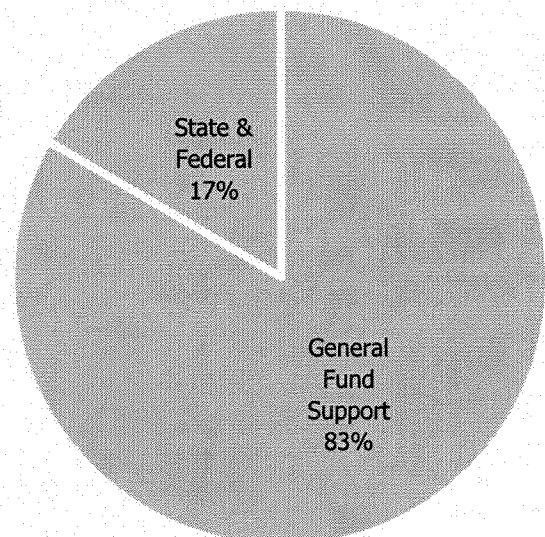
To advocate for veterans, their dependents, and survivors by providing the latest information and services for them to receive monetary and medical entitlements.

<u>Financial Summary</u>	<u>2005-06 Budget</u>	<u>2005-06 Projected</u>	<u>2006-07 Requested</u>	<u>2006-07 Recommended</u>	<u>Change From 2005-06</u>
Revenues	\$ 65,000	\$ 69,552	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ (5,000)
Salary and Benefits	305,760	298,500	324,823	324,823	19,063
Services and Supplies	31,004	44,756	34,309	34,309	3,305
<b>**Gross Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 336,764</b>	<b>\$ 343,256</b>	<b>\$ 359,132</b>	<b>\$ 359,132</b>	<b>\$ 22,368</b>
General Fund Support (G.F.S.)	\$ 271,764	\$ 273,704	\$ 299,132	\$ 299,132	\$ 27,368

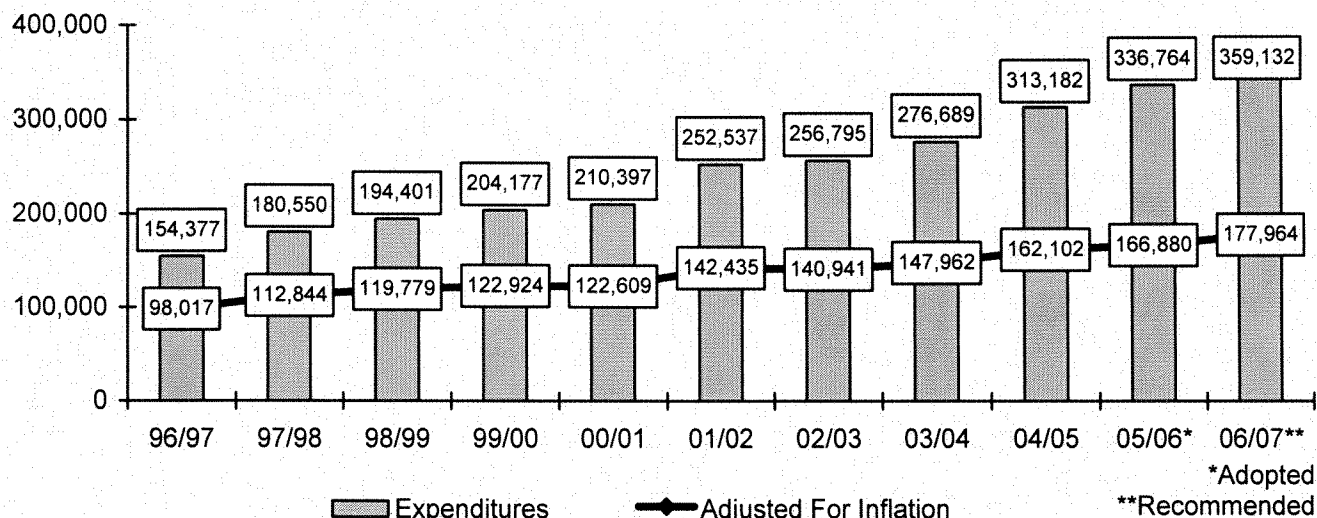
**Number of Employees**  
(Full Time Equivalent)



**Source of Funds**



### 10 Year Expenditures Adjusted For Inflation



#### SERVICE PROGRAMS

##### Claims Filing and Pension Income Maintenance

Screen applicants for potential benefits, complete forms, and collect documentation for potential claim filing, assist pension recipients in maintenance of income, and assist widows and children with entitlement claims.

Total Expenditures: \$240,618 Total Staffing (FTE): 2.68

##### College Fee Waiver Certificate

Process tuition fee waivers for children of disabled veterans so they may enroll in California Community Colleges, California State Universities, or University of California facilities at no charge.

Total Expenditures: \$10,774 Total Staffing (FTE): .12

##### Information and Referral

Provide information to veterans and their families on changing rules and conditions at governmental agencies including the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security Administration, local Department of Social Services, Public Guardian, Department of Health Services and others.

Total Expenditures: \$107,740 Total Staffing (FTE): 1.20

#### DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

The Department provides advocacy and assistance to the County's approximate 25,000 men and women who served in the nation's armed forces, and to their dependents and survivors. This type of assistance, claim filing, documentation and claim maintenance for monetary and health benefits is essential in local, state or federal governments claims. The department advocates for these benefits by filling out and submitting the actual forms for benefits, and filing notices of disagreements and appeals if the benefits are not granted.

#### Examples of results achieved in the past year - FY 05/06

##### Goal 1: Customer Service –

- Improved customer service by developing standard operating procedures so that all employees process veterans applications in a standard efficient manner. The Veterans Administration has a requirement that all claims be processed within 10 working days of receipt; we currently are accomplishing this within 6 working days.
- Established outreach efforts to over 250 returning and recently discharged veterans via mailers and briefings for these units. Also, we have attended various informational health and benefits fairs, briefed numerous local veterans groups, and sent out veteran educational benefit information to local high schools in an effort to increase awareness of program availability/benefits for dependents.

**Goal 2: Internal business processing improvements –**

- a. Reduced claims processing time due to the utilization of a new web based program (VETPRO). VETPRO was installed November 2005 and has reduced the claims processing time by 10%.

**Goal 3: Financial improvements –**

- a. The department is very small (4 employees) and was not able to make any internal financial improvements this year but veterans claims filed by our office were successful in obtaining new benefits totaling \$3,200,000 last year.
- b. We did receive a gift of \$44,167 from Virgil Leinardi; these funds were setup in a Trust Account for improvements to veterans services. We used \$12,552 of those funds to purchase 4 new computers and associated software to maximize the new VETPRO web based service program. The remainder of the funds remains in Trust for future use by the department with approval of the Board of Supervisors.

**Goal 4: Employee development –**

- a. Attended training sessions throughout the year to remain current on the ever-changing laws that effect veterans and their claims; used this information to provide training for staff that resulted in consistency of claims filed by our office.

**Major Focus for 06-07**

The Department will continue assisting the County's veterans in processing their claims with the Veterans Administration. We will be continuously exploring new options to make this the most efficient process possible. Major efforts for 06-07 include:

**Customer Service Improvements:** Continuous improvement will be focused on the following:

- a. Continue veteran outreach services to returning veterans and local veterans groups to inform them of veterans benefits that are available.
- b. Develop a new web page that will assist veterans in obtaining information on benefits and services that are available.

**Process Improvements:** The department will be focusing on developing additional software procedures and exploring new products in an effort to reduce claims processing time by 10%.

**Finance:** Small staff size and operating budget limit any financial changes for the department. The only increases in our operating budget will be for cost of living adjustments and benefits.

**Employee Development:**

- a. Continue to attend annual veterans training conferences and have monthly training sessions provide staff with up-to-date information on veterans issues.
- b. Provide staff training on new software technology in an effort to improve overall departmental performance.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommended General Fund support for FY 2006-07 budget for Veterans Services is \$27,368, or 10%, over adopted FY 2005-06. This increase is due to salary and benefit costs and for the first time, countywide overhead costs being budgeted for this department. In addition, revenues are budgeted at \$60,000, a decrease of \$5,000 compared to current adopted levels. The Veterans Services Office has seen a decline in revenues over the past few years due to the continuing decline in the veteran population in the County.

**GOALS/PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**Department Goal:** Provides veterans, their dependents, and survivors with advice on monetary, healthcare, insurance, and other government benefits.

**Community wide Result Link:** A healthy community.

**1. Performance Measure:** Percentage of customer satisfaction surveys which rated the services performed by the Veterans Services Department as "satisfied" or "very satisfied".

01-02 Actual Results	02-03 Actual Results	03-04 Actual Results	04-05 Actual Results	05-06 Adopted	05-06 Projected Results	06-07 Target
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**What:** A satisfaction survey of randomly selected clients, designed to be comparable to other counties, is conducted throughout the year to evaluate client satisfaction level.

**Why:** Ensure high quality service and continually assess client needs.

**How are we doing?** The returned surveys that the department receives back have consistently maintained a rating from clients of "satisfied" or "very satisfied".

**Department Goal:** Determine eligibility and file claims for monetary benefits (monthly disability, disability pension, death benefits) and healthcare benefits (medical, dental, vision, prosthetic devices) to ensure that eligible individuals receive the maximum benefit from entitled services.

**Community wide Result Link:** A healthy community. A well governed community.

**2. Performance Measure:** Dollar amount in cash benefits secured for new monetary claims filed (monthly disability, disability pension, death benefits).

01-02 Actual Results	02-03 Actual Results	03-04 Actual Results	04-05 Actual Results	05-06 Adopted	05-06 Projected Results	06-07 Target
\$2,484,037	\$2,993,822	\$3,001,420	\$2,809,874	\$3,000,000	\$2,800,000	\$2,800,000

**What:** The total cash received by clients as a result of the efforts of the department.

**Why:** This illustrates the desired outcome of ensuring that clients receive maximum entitled benefit.

**How are we doing?** The level of awards granted to veterans appears to have stabilized. New veteran (Iraqi freedom) claims are being given priority and are processed very rapidly, while other veterans' claims/appeals are taking far longer than in the past. Currently, the Los Angeles Veterans Administration has a back log of over 15,000 claims state wide. We expect this back log to continue to increase into the future which will result in large retroactive payments to veterans. San Luis Obispo veterans have approximately 600 new claims/appeals pending with the VA.

**3. Performance Measure:** Net cost per local veteran for Veterans Services assistance.

01-02 Actual Results	02-03 Actual Results	03-04 Actual Results	04-05 Actual Results	05-06 Adopted	05-06 Projected Results	06-07 Target
\$9.50/per veteran	\$10.05/per veteran	\$11.16	\$11.98	\$12.50	\$12.50	\$13.15

**What:** Veterans Administration's figures indicate that the Counties veteran population is 25,050 this year. This measure shows the net cost per local veteran for County Veterans Services assistance.

**Why:** This measure will establish data to compare ourselves to other counties.

**How are we doing?** In a survey of our benchmark counties, our cost per veteran was lower than the benchmark. The average for the benchmark counties for was \$12.79 per veteran; our cost was \$12.50 per veteran during 2005-2006. We are provided revenue from the State for 3 programs: Subvention Funds, Medical Cost Avoidance and License Plate Fees, these reimbursements help offset the net county cost, these funds are distributed via workload units. While our portion of revenue will be lower than adopted budget levels for 05/06, our workload effort has remained the constant. Other Counties with large returning veteran populations have seen a significant increase in their workload efforts.

**Department Goal:** Obtain free college tuition for eligible dependents of veterans (with service-related disabilities) by authorizing and processing College Fee Waivers with California Community Colleges, California State Universities, or University of California campuses.

**Community wide Result Link:** A prosperous community.

**4. Performance Measure:** Dollar amount of college tuition saved by eligible dependents due to the College Fee Waiver Program (based upon state negotiated fees with colleges).

01-02 Actual Results	02-03 Actual Results	03-04 Actual Results	04-05 Actual Results	05-06 Adopted	05-06 Projected Results	06-07 Target
\$129,172	\$185,890	\$242,516	\$407,280	\$300,000	\$320,000	\$320,000

**What:** Money saved on tuition by eligible dependents.

**Why:** To maximize use of entitled benefits.

**How are we doing?** The State has increased reimbursement levels for tuition fees and we have also had more students applying for and receiving awards resulting in an increase in total award levels, we also had a larger than anticipated number of applications (144 approvals), we believe this is due to our awareness outreach program with local schools.